
The Bishop of *CHICHESTER's*

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

HOUSE of LORDS,

On *February* the 4th, 1740.

Die Jovis 5° Februarii, 1740.

ORdered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, That the Thanks of this House be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of *Chichester*, for the Sermon by him preach'd before this House Yesterday in the Abby Church, *Westminster*; and he is hereby desired to cause the same to be printed and published.



ASHLEY COWPER,
Cler. Parliamentor.

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S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

HOUSE OF LORDS,

IN THE

ABBY-CHURCH of *Westminster*,

On *Wednesday, February 4th, 1740.*

Being the Day appointed by His Majesty for a General Fast and Humiliation to be observed in a most Solemn and Devout Manner, for obtaining the Pardon of our Sins, and imploring the Divine Blessing and Assistance on the Arms of His Majesty, and for restoring and perpetuating Peace, Safety, and Prosperity to Himself and to His Kingdoms.

By *MATTHIAS* Lord Bishop of *Chichester*.
Manton

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L O N D O N :

Printed for SOMERSET DRAPER: And Sold
by J. ROBERTS in *Warwick-Lane*, 1740.

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By MATTHEW HALL, Bishop of Chichester.



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Printed for GORRIER & DARRAS: And sold by J. HODGKINS in Warwick-Lane, 1740.

I S A M. vii~~6~~ 6. ‡

And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew Water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that Day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord.

THE People of *Israel* having been long harassed by the Inroads and Invasions of the *Philistines*, and the Waste and Ravages that they had committed ; whilst a Sense of their Sufferings was strong upon their Minds, and their Fears great of worse Times coming upon them, the Prophet *Samuel* points out to them in this Chapter the most likely Means of their Deliverance out of all their Fears, and Troubles, and the Dangers they were encompassed with : which was to humble themselves before God Almighty, and to endeavour to procure his Protection and Favour, by confessing and repenting of those great and manifold Sins, which had brought those heavy Judgments upon them. *If (says he) ye do return unto the Lord with all your Hearts, then put away the strange Gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your Hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the Hands of the Philistines, Ver. 3.*

As Times of Trouble and Perplexity do commonly of themselves instill into Men serious Thoughts, and they are then more willing to follow the Course by which their Condition may be mended ; the *Israelites*, moved with the Prophet's Representation of their Sin and their Danger, embraced his Advice and followed his Directions.

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They appointed a Fast at *Mizpeh*, one of their chief Cities, where the Elders of *Israel* were wont to assemble on urgent Occasions, and whither the People used to resort on Days of publick Humiliation for the Worship of God. And it was observed by them in as solemn Manner, with Marks of as great and universal Humiliation and Repentance, as any we meet with in the Old Testament. *They drew Water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that Day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord.* By pouring out Water seems to be meant either their own Weakness and Impotence without the Divine Assistance, that they were like Water spilt upon the Ground; or the Floods of Tears shed by them for their Sins. An Expression taken in this latter Sense, not unlike that of the Royal Psalmist, *Rivers of Water run down mine Eyes, because they keep not thy Law.* Psal. cxix. 136.

From this Time the Fortunes of *Israel* began to change for the better, and their Affairs grew prosperous. For tho' the *Philistines* again invaded them whilst they were keeping the Fast at *Mizpeh*, and put them at first into Consternation, yet the *Israelites* recovering themselves they went out against them, and gave them such an entire Overthrow, as forced them to give back the Cities they had taken from them, and they never again infested them as long as *Samuel* lived.

I would not hereby insinuate, that any exact Comparison can be drawn between the Circumstances of the *Israelites* and those of the present Times among us. For they had been twice discomfited in Battle, and the Ark of the Covenant, the Symbol of God's more immediate Presence among them, had been carried away Captive and led about in Triumph, by which their whole Religion became the Scorn and Derision of their Enemies. Whereas We have lived in the full Enjoyment of our Religious and Civil Rights; and for many Years past in a State of Peace and Tranquillity. And in the War, we are now engaged in, our Arms have been already attended with some very important Successes; and we have

have met with nothing that should discourage us from hoping to bring it to a safe and honourable Peace.

Nor have we any of that gross Idolatry among us, which the Prophet here cautions the *Israelites* against, as one of the chief Causes of God's sending those severe Calamities upon them: But the other Extreme, that irreligious and atheistical Spirit, which hath got so much ground among us, is as high a Provocation in the Sight of God, and very bad with respect to Government. For by discarding all Sense of the Fear of God, and cancelling the Obligations of Conscience, it resolves all Obedience to Governours into Self-Interest, makes Faction and Sedition to be meritorious, whenever it shall be thought advantageous; and leaves Men at full Liberty to commit, what Acts of Fraud, Injustice, or Wickedness they think fit, whenever they can do it safely, and without Danger from the Laws *.

Nor

* We cannot, by any means, subscribe to the Conjecture of *Grotius* in his Introduction, *That the Laws of Nature would take Place, should we (as we cannot without the most horrid Impiety) deny either the Being of God, or his Concern in Human Affairs.* For the Edicts of Reason could not then rise so high, as to pass into the Condition of Laws, inasmuch as all Law supposes a superior Power.

Puffendorf, p. 142.

I suspect that *Grotius* never designed to express himself with Philosophical Exactness, but meant only, That the Laws of Nature being founded upon the Constitution of Mankind, and necessarily contributing to the Advantage of every one, would not cease to take place, and be practised outwardly in some measure, altho' no Deity be acknowledged; but then they cannot be looked upon as Duties, nor can be put in Practice but upon the Account of some Interest or Vain-glory. Mr. *Bayle* goes much farther, and maintains in his *Considerations upon a Comet*, p. 554. That Reason, without any Knowledge of God, may sometimes persuade a Man, that a Thing is honest, and good, and commendable to be done, not for the Advantage coming by it, but because it is suitable to Reason. Chancellor *Bacon* hath delivered much the same thing in his Essays, making a Parallel between Superstition and Atheism. I shall only make some short Reflections, as, 1. That the Notions of Honesty stript of all Relation to the Will of God, the Supreme Lawgiver, the Author of our Being, the Protector of Mankind and of Society, are mere Chimæra's, or mere barren Principles, pure Speculations, incapable of laying a Foundation for good Morality, or to produce solid Virtue. *If we look upon the Atheist* (says Mr. *Bayle* himself) *in the Disposition of his Mind, we shall find that he, not being aw'd by any Fears of Punishment, nor encouraged with the Hopes of God's Blessing, must resign himself to the Government of his Passions.* 2. That, so far as we can judge by Conjecture, a Society of

Nor can it be denied, that we resemble the *Israelites* in their Ingratitude to God for the many great Deliverances he had wrought for them, and in their Murmurings and Discontents, like them, never long pleased with any Government, but wishing for a Change; and in their Looseness and Debauchery

of Atheists, all Things else being equal, would be more corrupt, and subject to more Disorders, than any of those who retain some Principles of Religion, although imperfect and incoherent. I say, All Things else being equal. For it would be ridiculous to compare, for example, a polite and well-instructed People with a savage Nation, who have not Sense enough to do any Evil. We must besides, if we will exactly distinguish the Effects proper to Atheism, and a good or bad Religion, suppose the Persons so compared together, to be very near furnished with the same Notions, and to be in the same Situation, and under the same Circumstances in general, otherwise we shall be in Danger of attributing to Religion, what really proceeds from Nature, Education, Custom, or the like; which Religion is very little or nothing conducing to; or we may accuse Religion of Impotency, by reason of some invincible Obstacles in them, upon whom it would not fail to produce its Effect, were it not that they are ignorant of the most necessary Point. Upon this Foot I maintain, that Religion, tho' corrupted, would produce better Effects than Atheism, that it would disturb Society less, and that the Good it would do, would be much greater than the Evil it would cause. I will not deny, but there may be amongst these Atheists, Men of Sense and Philosophers, who, reflecting that it is better for Men to subject themselves to certain Rules of Life, than for every Man to follow his Humours only, may observe them outwardly, so far as they are exempt from such Circumstances, as some great Interest present, or some violent Passion forces them upon, such Counsels as are reasonable, calm and aware of the Consequences. But the common Sort of ignorant People, and Idiots, which make up the greatest Part of Society, are not able to make such Reflections. To curb in therefore the Violence of their Passions, and to outweigh Mens private Interests, which often clash with the publick Good, some more obvious Principle, which all the World may be sensible of, and which may make the deepest Impressions upon them, must be found out, and that, in a Word, can be no other than the Fear of a Deity. Experience sufficiently confirms this, that in all Times this Motive has had great Influences upon the Mind of Man: for who knows not, that in the darkest Times of Paganism, it was the Cause of Honesty in many Nations? Mr. Bayle proves at large, That Men did not always act according to their Principles, and so it might well happen, that many Pagans did not perceive nor draw the Consequences which followed from the false Notions which they had of the Deity. 'Tis certain, that not only the Philosophers, but the Vulgar looked upon the Gods as the Revengers of the Violation of the Laws of Nature. *Barbeyrac's Notes, p. 142.*

Mr. Bayle, who has quoted the Passage of *Grotius* upon which our Author criticizes, explains it thus. We should be obliged to follow the Law of Nature, if we supposed that there was no God nor Providence. (*Continuat. &c. p. 768.*) But his Way of expressing himself, viz. *Hæc locum aliquem haberent, etiamsi daremus, &c.* shews that he meant no more than what is expressed in my Note above. I know not what Mr. Bayle means by these Words, *Law* and *Obligation*; but in the Language of the Philosophers, a *Law* supposes a Superior, and *Jus* comes from *Jubeo*, because

bauchery of Manners, which so often provoked God to deliver 'em into their Enemies Hands; and which, in the natural Course of Things, do of themselves tend to bring, sooner or later, Destruction upon Kingdoms.

I am not so little acquainted with the History of past Ages, as to be over-apt to complain, much less am I disposed to aggravate the Corruption of our own Times. I should be much better pleased to have any Occasion of commending, than of reproving and finding fault with the Times, which I take no Delight in. Vice and Virtue, like all other Things under the Sun, are in a perpetual Fluctuation, they have alternately prevailed and got ground of each other in all Nations, as Religion has declined or flourished amongst 'em. And who can weigh the Ages in Scales, or Nations in a Balance, and precisely say, how much the Sins of one are greater than those of another? But still some Things must be confessed to be certain. As,

First, That all the Vices Men are liable to, Pride, Ambition, Envy, Revenge, Intemperance and Excess, Idleness, Luxury, Prophaneness, and Impiety, are, in a greater or less Degree, in proportion as they prevail, hurtful to the Publick,

because Right and Law proceed from the Authority of a Superior. Our Author, as I think, has very well proved, in the foregoing *Chapter*, §. 20. and *Lib. i. Ch. vi.* §. 7, 8. That Man's Will cannot impose any Obligation, properly so called, upon itself, and that Maxims of Reason are not sufficient of themselves to determine the Will necessarily this Way or that Way. All that Mr. Bayle says, proves only, 1. That an Atheist knows that Thankfulness and Ingratitude are two different Things, as are also Faithfulness and Deceitfulness, a Circle and a Triangle. 2. He can perceive that the Maxims of Virtue are not purely arbitrary, but that they have a Foundation in the Nature of Things, and imply a certain Convenience. But can that alone make him certainly follow those Maxims contrary to his private Interest, and the Bent of his Desire? I can't think it can ever come into an Atheist's Mind, much less, that he shall have Courage to sacrifice his earnest Passions to those fine Notions. He may think it becomes a reasonable Creature to conform to Reason; but from the Moment that these Maxims of Reason are opposed by the Enjoyment of any Pleasure, in which he promises himself more Satisfaction than he at present enjoys, he'll silence his Reason, and follow the Allurements of Sense. Let us speak the Truth, Supposing the Impiety of the Atheist, he does not act unreasonably in following the Voice of Nature, those Words, according to Mr. Bayle, are (*Continuat. &c. p. 31.*) "We must eat and drink well, enjoy all the Pleasures of Sense, prefer our own Interest before another's, accommodate ourselves to every Thing that is agreeable, to do a Wrong rather than suffer any, to revenge ourselves, &c."

as well as to particular Persons. Some of 'em fill Kingdoms with Faction and Discontent, others enfeeble the Bodies of Men; some introduce private Decay and Poverty, and publick and national Want, others loosen the Bands of Society in general. When they get to a Head, they not only forebode, but help to bring on unquiet and troublesome Times, which often end in violent Changes and Dissolutions of Governments.

By a strict Observance of good Laws and Discipline, by Justice and Temperance, and Habits of Industry and Frugality, the *Romans* continued for some Ages the most flourishing People that had been known. The very Constitution of their Government subjected 'em to Disputes and Contests about Power and Privileges, which often bred fierce Animosities amongst them. But they knew that Nations divided within themselves were little regarded by their Neighbours *; that those intestine Divisions discouraged their Friends, enlivened the Hopes, and raised the Spirit of their Enemies †: And therefore, when they had foreign Enemies to deal with, they were so wise as to suspend their private Resentments and Animosities ‡, and postpone 'em to some more seasonable Time, when they might be resumed, if there shou'd be occasion, with less Danger to the Publick. By which steady Course of publick Wisdom and Virtue, they not only preserved their Government for several Ages, but

* When the *Tarentines* sent Embassadors to *Rome*, to mediate and make up a Quarrel between the *Romans* and the *Samnites*, they were ridicul'd by the *Roman* Consul, Vanissimam increpabat gentem, quæ rerum suarum impotens præ intestinis seditionibus discordiisque, aliis Belli Pacisque modum facere æquum censeret. *Liv.* l. 9. c. 14.

† Inde ad Veiens bellum profecti, quo undique ex Etruria auxilia convenerant, non tam Vejentium gratiâ concitata, quam quod in spem venerant, discordiâ intestinâ dissolvi rem Romanam posse. Principesque in omnium Etruriæ populorum conciliis fremebant, Æternas opes esse Romanas, nisi inter semet ipsi seditionibus sæviant. Id unum venenum, eam labem civitatibus opulentis repertam, ut magna imperia mortalia essent. *Lib.* 2. c. 44.

‡ Orta profecto esset discordia inter Patres Plebemque, adeo Tribuni jam ferocem per se Plebem criminando in Primores civitatis instigabant. Sed externus timor magnum concordie vinculum, quamvis suspectos, insensosque inter se jungebat animos. *Lib.* 2. cap. 39.

raised it to the highest Pitch of Glory and Greatness, and became at last the Rulers of the World.

But when Luxury was introduced among 'em, and Riot and Excess of all Kinds abounded, and had infected all Ranks of Men; the better Sort, incumbered with their Debts, and pressed with their Wants, some of 'em assisted one turbulent Spirit, others another, to invade the Liberties of their Country, hoping to better their Condition, and repair their Fortunes out of the Ruins of the Publick. As any Side got the upper Hand, they exerted their mutual Revenge upon one another, filling all Places with Confiscations and Proscriptions, and all the other dreadful Effects of Civil Dissention. They brought Things to that pass at last, that when the People were wearied out with the several Sorts of Oppression and Misery they had groaned under, and could find no Remedy for their Distresses, they were forced to submit to the Usurpation and Tyranny of a single Person, which destroyed their Government, and put an end to their Liberties.

Secondly, Vice tends to the Ruin of Kingdoms, not only from the natural Course of Things, but likewise from the ordinary Course of God's Providence in the Government of the World.

The History of the *Jews*, as we find it in the Old Testament, is a continued Scene of Deliverances and Judgments, wrought by God himself, either in favour of that People to reward their Virtue, or punish their Iniquities. While they were stedfast to their Duty, Providence by an outstretched Arm sheltered 'em from Danger, blessed 'em with peaceful Days and fruitful Seasons: But when they swerved from it, as they often did, all Sorts of cross Accidents and Calamities beset them, and nothing prospered that they took in hand. Sometimes one Nation, sometimes another was raised up to distress 'em; when Faintness was sent into their Hearts, and such a Spirit of Infatuation into their Counsels, "That their
"wonted Courage and Magnanimity (as Mr. *Hooker* ob-

" serves *) utterly forsook 'em; and when they sat in
 " Council, what, Children might have seen, their gravest,
 " Senators could not discern. Their Prophets saw Darkness
 " instead of Visions, and from the Issues of all Attempts
 " they could come to no certain Conclusion but this, That
 " God and Heaven were against 'em in all that they did."

It hath not indeed pleased God to enter into a like Covenant with any other People, such as that of the *Jews* was, yet Obedience to his Laws will be the Rule of his Dealing with the other Nations of the World, as he hath expressly declared by the Mouth of the Prophet *Jeremiah*. *At what Instant* (says he) *I shall speak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down and to destroy it: If that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them.* Chap. xviii. Ver. 7, 8.

And, as the Apostle argues, was the Providence of God confined to the *Jewish State*? *Was God the God of the Jews, and is he not God of the Gentiles also?* Whoever believes a Providence, and reflects on the moral Attributes of God, must think, that Nations and Kingdoms are under his more particular Care and Inspection; and that he will not prosper any People, among whom Vice and Immorality more than ordinarily abound.

Thirdly, It must likewise be confessed, that a great Corruption, both in Principle and Practice, has widely diffused itself throughout the Kingdom, and that Irreligion and Vice hardly ever appeared more open and bare-faced than they do among us at present. I speak not now of the common Corruption of human Nature, such as is to be met with at all Times and in all Places; but of a more than ordinary Want of Justice and Honesty; of a Neglect and Contempt of Religion, beyond what has been usual in former Times; and of the Growth and Prevalence of Profaneness and Impiety; Vices, which are more particularly apt to provoke God to withdraw his Protection from any People, and inflict the severest

verest Calamities upon 'em. I mean a visible Neglect and Decay of practical Christianity among us, together with a general Looseness of Principle and Licentiousness of Manners.

Under a Complication of such ill Circumstances, when we have so little Reason to depend upon the Blessing of God Almighty, that we ought rather to be afraid of his Judgments; and whilst we are so sore with the Wounds of the last War, that we have not as yet recovered the Loss of that Blood and Treasure which it occasioned; it were much to have been wished, that the Pressures and Inconveniences, which must of Necessity attend a new War, could have been prevented.

For when a Fire is once kindled, when War is broke out, no Wisdom can foresee, how far it may reach, how long it may last, or what will be the Event of it. It is always hazardous and uncertain, even when entered into with the greatest Advantages, and the fairest Probability of Success. *The Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong.* Nor can we always depend on a good Cause for a prosperous Issue, since we often see unjust Arms triumph over the justest Cause, Virtue and Innocence oppressed, and a much worse Event of Things to the Righteous than the Wicked.

But when all peaceful Expedients have been tried, and found to have no Influence, and Things are come to such Extremity, that nothing but Arms can decide the Quarrel; what we cannot obtain by Treaty, we must endeavour to procure, as our Ancestors were wont to do, by repelling Force with Force; or we must suffer our selves to be trampled under Foot by a People, who have always been made to feel the Weight of our Resentments, as often as they have formed any Designs against us. We must convince 'em, that we can maintain our Rights against their Encroachments and Usurpations, or we can expect no Peace with them that will not prove insidious, and as fatal in the Event as any War can do. The primary Law of Nature, that of Self-Defence,
makes

makes it necessary for us in such Cases, leaving the Issue to him who judgeth righteously, to try to do Justice to ourselves.

The Posture of Things all about us; the Condition of our Neighbours, who for so many Years past have applied themselves with uncommon Zeal and Industry to the Business of Trade, and become by it very formidable, will probably make a great Maritime Force always necessary to a People in our Situation, which nothing but our Commerce can furnish us with. Whoever considers how with us this is the chief Source from whence the Blood and Spirits are convey'd into every Part of the Body Politick, must think that to maintain such important Rights as we are now contending for, is no less necessary than it would be to repel an Enemy that should invade us. When we have unsheath'd the Sword, not to invade the Rights or Dominions of any Prince or State whatsoever, but to defend our own; if any War can be just by the Laws of Nature and Nations, or of the Gospel, the present must be so. And if we are not wanting to ourselves, from the Uprightness of our Intentions, and the Goodness of our Cause, with the Blessing of God Almighty, we may hope for Success in it, and a happy Conclusion of it. By being not wanting to ourselves I mean,

First, That we follow the Prophet *Samuel's* Advice, that *we prepare our Hearts unto the Lord*; and confess, with the *Israelites* in my Text, what may with great Truth be said, *We have sinned against the Lord*.

For we have not only sinned against the Lord, but obstinately gone on in our sinful Ways, and grown worse and worse, with respect both to Religion and Morals; under as great Advantages of being better, under as clear a Light of the Gospel, and after as great Mercies received from God, as ever any People enjoyed.

When King *James II.* set up arbitrary Power, and attempted to bring in Popery, the Dangers that then threatned us, as they united us among ourselves, so they raised up likewise, in all Ranks and Degrees of Men, a Spirit of undisssembled Piety among us. We shook off that Coldness and
In-

Indifferency, as to all Concerns of Religion, which had been growing upon us from the *Restoration*, and became very serious both in the Profession and Practice of it. The Primitive Times, in some sort, seem'd to be revived, *when Men continued stedfast in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and Prayer.*

We are now embarked in a great and expensive War. The Nations around us, and all *Europe*, are in a Posture of War, tho' not actually engaged in it; and seem to be in such a perplexed Situation, that no Mortal can see far into it, much less what will be the Event of it. To the present Times may we apply, not unfitly, the Words of the Psalmist, *They walk on in Darknes, the Foundations of the Earth are out of course.*

At Home, however the Minds of Men may seem not so exasperated as before the Breaking-out of the War, yet our Breaches are far from being healed. We are still full of Uneasiness and Discontent, of Strife and Envy, of Suspicions and Jealousies of one another, of Anger and Impatience; weakening our own Strength, which ought to be turned with its whole Weight against our common Enemies. God only knows what these Things will end in. But unless, by a speedy Repentance, we endeavour to appease the Wrath of Almighty God; unless we seriously apply ourselves to the great Business of this Day, the reforming our corrupt Lives and Manners, which the Times call upon us so loudly to do, we may justly fear lest they prove the Fore-runners of some unfortunate Event; and that terrible Sentence be pronounced against us, which the Divine Wisdom hath pronounced against the Impenitent; *I have called, and ye have refused; I stretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded. But ye have set at nought my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof. I also will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh.* God grant that the present cloudy Face of our Affairs, and the Dangers that now threaten us, may have the same, but a more lasting Effect upon us, than the Fears of Popery and Arbitrary Power had at the *Revolution.*

For

For no sooner were those Dangers over, but we forsook God, by whose Goodness we had been delivered; and forgot the Promises we made in the Day of our Distress. As our Fears abated, our Sins increased; Impiety, Profaneness and Immorality soon got to a great Height; and have gone on increasing with such an unbridled Licentiousness, as threatens us more than any other Presages, that can be drawn from the Posture of our Affairs, either at home or abroad.

When Corruption of Manners is become so general, and Religion has lost its Influence; when the Disease is grown too obstinate for all milder Remedies, the Interposition of the Magistrate becomes very necessary, in order to put some stop to it, and suppress it. For he is the Minister of God, appointed by him for this Purpose, *for the Punishment of evil Doers, and the Praise of them that do well.*

It has often been observed, that Laws are always most numerous in Countries where Vice most abounds*. For as Vice at first made Laws necessary, so, as that increases, new Laws become necessary for the Safety of the Publick. And accordingly we have many wise and good Laws made from Time to Time against Vice and Debauchery; and every new Sort of it, has appeared. But the best Laws in the World signify no more towards the Suppression of Vice, than Sea-Marks do towards stopping the Course of the Tides; unless the executive Power, unless Magistrates and Officers, whose Business it is to enforce the Observance of them, put Life into them, and give them their Operation. The Correction of Vice depends much more upon them, than upon the Laws, or the Law-makers themselves.

And here it may not be amiss to observe, that among the domestick Evils we labour under, and the Disorders of the present Times, the immoderate Use of strong spirituous Liquors is none of the least. For this Pestilence, tho' it doth not destroy at Noon-day, and so openly as it did a few Years ago, yet it still continues to cause a great deal of Distress

* *Corruptiff. reip. plurimæ Leges.*

as it

strefs and Misery among the Poor, by impairing their Healths, and unfitting them for Labour, by depraving their Morals, and shortening their Days. Waving all Considerations that may be drawn from Religion, yet for the Sake of the Publick, and out of common Humanity, it were greatly to be desired, that some Remedy could be provided, that should effectually root out the Cause of this Complaint. It may perhaps be very difficult to find out such an Expedient, when the Evil is become so inveterate; but 'till that be done, give me leave to say, that the Laws already in Being ought to be turned against it with their whole Force, and an unrelenting Severity.

Whether Points of Speculation which can have no Influence upon Government, may justly be restrained by the Civil Power, has been Matter of Dispute: But open Prophaneness and Impiety *, and all immoral and dissolute Practices,

* Atheists are to be judged Offenders not only against the Divine Majesty, but against all Mankind. And they deserve the less Favour, because they would reverse the Judgment of all People, and of all Ages, arrogantly assuming to themselves a deeper Sagacity, and a clearer Light of Understanding, than the World was ever acquainted with before. And consequently tho' their Belief be an Error, and a most fatal and destructive one; yet it is such as they did not fall into thro' Imprudence or Simplicity, but by a vain and impudent Pretence of more than ordinary Degrees of Wisdom.

Puffendorf of the Law of Nature, Pag. 255. Edit. 4th.

I cannot but wonder that our Author gives such a careless Solution of the Question, which he touches by the Bye, *viz.* Whether Atheists ought to be punish'd? He maintains elsewhere, (*viz.* in his Book *Of the Duties of a Man and Citizen*) that they ought to suffer the most grievous Punishments. *Gravissimis penis est coercenda eorum impietas.* But on the contrary, some say that such Men ought not to be treated so severely. For, say they, the Method of Punishment and Force is not proper to cure a Man of Atheism; the only Punishment of such as are in Error, if they will not be instructed, is to leave 'em to God's Judgment. For my part, I profess that if an Atheist makes an open Declaration of his Opinion, and labours to get himself Followers, by misleading such weak Judgments as are not able to answer his Sophisms and Subtleties; or by encouraging those vicious Persons, who are ready, thro' the Wickedness of their Hearts, to embrace his Tenets; such a Person may with as much Justice be punished, as he that teaches others to thieve, murder, or cheat. Let him be content that he has found out the unhappy Secret of shaking off all Tyes of Religion, and applauding his own Impiety, and not hope that others should follow his Example, but be easy that they resolve to continue in the common Opinion for the Advantage of Human Society, knowing how strong Impressions the Fear of God has made upon most Men.

Barbeyrac's Notes, ibid.

Has igitur Notitias *viz.* Numen esse aliquod, et curari ab eo Res hominum, qui primi incipiunt tollere, sicut in bene constitutis Civitatibus coerceri solent, ut Diagoræ

Practices, are so clearly within the Reach of the Magistrate's Jurisdiction, that if this be not granted, he will bear the Sword in vain, and they will grow too hard for all Laws and for all Government.

The Hearts of Men are indeed out of the Reach of all human Authority, and they cannot be truly made either religious or virtuous merely by the Force of the Laws. But the End of Punishment is not barely to correct and reform the Offenders themselves; but likewise to restrain and deter others, by their Examples, from committing the like Crimes. So that were the Laws to be duly executed, we might hope to see a great deal of that Mischief prevented, which is every day produced by the Contagion of ill Examples, and the boldness and commonness of Vice. Arts and Sciences flourish, as they are countenanced; and whatever is in Vogue and Estimation, Men will endeavour to excel in that Way; and so were none to be encouraged or countenanced, who did not tread in the Paths of Virtue; by degrees the World would grow better, and Vice would be afraid and ashamed to show its Head. The Ground Vice lost, would be so much Strength added to Virtue; and the Times growing more virtuous, Christianity would appear in a different Light from what it does at this Day.

May the Consideration of what has been said on this Head, sink so deep into our Hearts, that all of us, Magistrates, Ministers and People, may not only forsake our own personal Sins, but in our Spheres be diligent to do our Parts, towards putting some stop to the great Corruption of the Times. That we may retrieve the Credit and Reputation of our Country; for as

Melior accidisse legimus, et Epicureis qui ex bene moratis Civitatibus ejecti sunt; ita et coerceri posse arbitror nomine humanæ Societatis, quam sine probabili ratione violant.

Grotius de jure Bell. l. 2. c. 20. §. 46.

Mr. Bayle excludes 'em from a Right to a Toleration, as sapping or weakening the fundamental Laws of the State. They can never, says he, plead Conscience for vending their Tenets. Incapable of making this Plea, they lie justly exposed to the utmost Rigour of the Laws; and the Moment they vend their Notions, after Warning once given them, may be justly punished as Movers of Sedition; who believing no Restraint above Human Laws, presume nevertheless to tread 'em under Foot.

Philosop. Commentary, Pag. 308.

Righteousness

Righteousness exalteth a Nation, so Sin is a Reproach to any People; and engage him to be on our Side, on whose Favour the Success of all our Undertakings, on whom all that we fear or hope for in the present War depends, much more than upon the Wisdom of our Counsels, the Strength of our Fleets that are fitted out, or of our Armies that may be sent into the Field. For as Solomon observes, There is no Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Counsel against the Lord. The Horse may be prepared against the Day of Battle, but Safety is of the Lord.

By being not wanting to our selves, I mean,

Secondly, That next to seeking the Blessing of Almighty God, we employ all the Power that he hath given us, and pursue with Vigour and Constancy such Measures as shall be thought fittest to procure us the Satisfaction we insist upon, and to effectuate our Designs.

And here the Occasion of this Day's Solemnity, and the Capacity I now appear in, will allow me to say, that in such a Conjunction as this, when Enterprizes are in hand of such high Moment, and the Issue of them uncertain, which may so nearly affect the Welfare and Safety of our Government, if we have any real Concern for the Blessings we enjoy under it, we ought to be united among ourselves at Home, that we may have nothing to do but to provide against the Dangers that may ensue from Abroad.

If instead of cultivating Peace and Union among ourselves, we provoke and exasperate one another, and quarrel about the Means of our Preservation, if we *bite and devour one another*, tho' we had no Enemy that could come upon us, we ought to take heed, lest we *be consumed one of another*. Such Things were the *Beginning of Sorrows*, and ushered in the great Rebellion in the last Age; which spilt the Blood of so many of our Nobility and Gentry, ruined so many great and flourishing Families, and well nigh destroyed us.

Let us then *follow after the Things that make for Peace* among ourselves. And that we may be better able to do this, let us endeavour to suppress those irregular Passions, which

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are often the Cause of great Impatience of all Rule and Government in Subjects, as well as of Tyranny in Princes. Let us learn of the Apostle, *not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think*. Let us learn to be as contented with our Condition as we are with our Merit, or that Share of Wisdom and Understanding that God hath given us. Humility is altogether as necessary in the Conduct of Civil Life, as in Religion, and would go a great way in putting a stop to those Animosities, which at present rage with so much Violence amongst us.

We have now upon the Throne of his Ancestors, a Prince of great Justice and Lenity; as careful in maintaining the Liberties of his Subjects, as the Rights of the Crown. Who makes it his great Concern to support the Established Church, and preserve inviolable the Toleration, which ought to make all Men easy with respect both to their Religion and Liberties. Who proposes no End to himself, but the Honour, Safety, and Prosperity of his Kingdoms.

With this View he has enter'd into the present War; and having done it with the united Voice of the whole Body of his People, all Sorts of Men among us, we ought all of us, (however we may differ about other Matters) to concur in this Point, to assist him chearfully in the Prosecution of it.

As we hope to get out of it with Honour, and bring it to a speedy and safe Peace, let us endeavour to strengthen the King's Hands, by doing what in us lies to extend his Government over the Hearts and Affections of his Subjects. Since whatever Confidence we repose in him, we have great Reason to think he will make no other Use of it, than to preserve our Religion and defend our Laws; and to transmit them safe to the Generations to come, by perpetuating in His Royal House the Succession to the Imperial Crown of these Realms, on which the secure Enjoyment of every thing that can be valuable to a Protestant and free People, upon which (under God) the Happiness of us, and our Posterity, depends.

F I N I S